

VZCZCXRO4033
PP RUEHCN RUEHGH RUEHVC
DE RUEHBJ #6233/01 2640839
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 210839Z SEP 07
FM AMEMBASSY BEIJING
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2102
INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK 1308
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0356
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ASTANA 0023
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT 1130
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 0345
RUEHMR/AMEMBASSY MASERU 0021
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 6607

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 006233

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/22/2017
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TI](#) [PK](#) [KG](#) [AF](#) [KZ](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: CHINESE TERRORISM EXPERT CALLS HIZB UT-TAHRIR A
GROWING THREAT IN XINJIANG

REF: BEIJING 5898

BEIJING 00006233 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Acting Political Chief Ted Lyng. Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

Summary

11. (C) Ma Pinyan, a terrorism expert at the Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences, told Poloff September 1 that while violent terrorism is on the decline, Xinjiang authorities are concerned by the growth of non-violent fundamentalist movements like Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami (Islamic Party of Liberation). While not a terrorist group, Hizb ut-Tahrir provides spiritual support for terror, Ma said. Hizb ut-Tahrir is actively recruiting in Xinjiang and has "a few thousand" members in China's Muslim communities, primarily in the underdeveloped, predominantly Uighur southern region of Xinjiang. End summary.

Xinjiang Has Terrorism Under Control

12. (C) Poloff met September 1 with Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences terrorism expert Ma Pinyan. Echoing comments made by Xinjiang Public Security Bureau (PSB) officials to CODEL Larsen-Kirk (reftel), Ma said violent terrorism has been on the decline in Xinjiang since the 1990s. Even before the 9/11 terror attacks in the United States, Xinjiang saw a drop in violent extremism. Ma attributed Xinjiang's success to modern police methods and the Uighur community's rejection of terrorism.

But Fundamentalism A Long-Term Problem

13. (C) Despite recent successes in combating terrorism in China's West, Ma said he was not optimistic about the long-term "problem" of Islamic fundamentalism. Groups that preach fundamentalist Islam, yet do not advocate violence, represent a great challenge to Xinjiang authorities, he said. Even if they do not endorse terrorism, these groups create spiritual support for violence, Ma claimed.

14. (C) Ma singled out Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami

(Islamic Party of Liberation) as a special concern in Xinjiang. Founded in Jerusalem in 1953, Hizb ut-Tahrir seeks to create a unified Islamic state. Hizb ut-Tahrir claims it wants to achieve its objectives through non-violent means, though Ma described the group as "radical" because it rejects socialism, capitalism and all non-Islamic governing systems. Ma said there are "a few thousand" members of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Xinjiang, the majority of whom are in the predominantly Uighur cities of Kashgar and Hotan in the more underdeveloped south of Xinjiang. The group maintains a "very tight, pyramid shaped" internal structure. While traditionally Hizb ut-Tahrir has targeted Xinjiang university students or young, unemployed university graduates for recruitment, Ma said the party is conducting more and more grass-roots recruiting drives in rural Uighur villages.

15. (C) In 2007 the Xinjiang government started a propaganda campaign specifically targeting Hizb ut-Tahrir, an action Ma said he has long urged. In the past, local authorities were preoccupied with violent groups like the East Turkistan Islamic Movement and did not pay enough attention to non-violent fundamentalist organizations. While membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir is grounds for imprisonment in China, sentences are fairly light given the group's lack of terrorist connections. Many Uighurs are emerging from Xinjiang prisons even more radicalized, Ma warned. Many prison guards are poorly educated Uighurs who are unable to perform effective counseling to "reconvert" prisoners to mainstream Islam.

16. (C) While Xinjiang leaders frequently tout economic development as a key factor in their anti-terrorism campaign, Ma expressed skepticism. Although

BEIJING 00006233 002.2 OF 002

acknowledging that economic prosperity has increased the public's desire for stability, Ma said it would be naive to believe economic growth alone can stop the growth of fundamentalist Islam, which he linked to terrorism.
Randt